

# White, Fleetwood Make Council Candidacy Official

## CITY BUILDING DEPARTMENT RAPPELLED IN PROBE OF HOUSING COMPLAINTS

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## State Report Made To City Council

Investigation of the city's building department was ordered Tuesday after a report issued by M. D. McDonough, chief of the State's Division of Housing, was read before the City Council.

The report, drawn up after state investigations of a tract known as Crenshaw Gardens in North Torrance, recommended that the Council "review the building department's needs and operational procedure and methods of maintaining both office and field records to avoid a repetition of these conditions in the future."

Conditions referred to in the recommendation were turned up by representatives of the Division of Housing and of the State Contractors License Board which were asked to investigate charges by residents of the tract that irregularities and possible violations of the California State Housing Act and the City Building Code existed in the construction of the dwellings.

A generalized report, listing the principal code violations found by the investigators, was submitted to the city Tuesday, over the signature of John F. Baxter, area supervisor for the Division of Housing, and was read by City Attorney James M. Hall at Tuesday's adjourned meeting of the Council.

The Council immediately moved that the report be referred to City Manager George Stevens for investigation of the comments made concerning the building department. Most serious of the charges contained in the report appeared to be the allegation that construction differs from that shown on the original approved plans and that in most instances, the deviations from the approved plans are in violation of the building code.

Two more developments are presently under investigation by the two State agencies and reports on them are expected later this month. The complete text of the State report issued here Tuesday follows: Honorable City Council City Hall City of Torrance Torrance, California Gentlemen:

Representatives of this Division and of the State Contractors License Board have completed a detailed examination and investigation of alleged irregularities in construction and possible violations of the California State Housing Act and the City Building Code in a portion of the tract of dwellings known as Crenshaw Gardens.

By way of review, the State Housing Act establishes minimum standards for dwellings within cities, and the Legislature entrusted City Building officials with the enforcement of the construction features of the Act. Cities are permitted under Section 1513 of the Act to impose more restrictive requirements, which was done by the City of Torrance with the adoption of the Uniform Building Code 1949 Edition, in effect at the time Crenshaw Gardens was under construction.

Principal violations other than poor construction practices and workmanship are with respect to the City Building Code: (a) Foundations and footings have been placed wholly or in part on filled ground without evidence of sufficient soil compaction, and footings have not been placed at 18-inch minimum depth as required by the Building Code; (b) Fireplace footings similarly inadequate; (c) Fireplace chimneys lack proper anchorage at gelling or roof line; (d) Insufficient or improper roof bracing. Damaged plaster resulting from walls improperly framed and constructed. Floor joists exceed span and deflection limits. Foundation block blocking over foundation and supporting girders; (e) Lintels or headers over garage door openings not supported on footings, but resting on slab resulting in slab fractures and settling; (f) Floor furnace vents improperly installed or supported haphazardly. Attached is a list of UBC (Uniform Building Code) See

rumors that have been violated in the construction of homes in Crenshaw Gardens. Some comment is in order relative to the records or lack of same as maintained by the Building Department. Section 304 of the Code requires at least four inspections during construction. Job Permit cards lack evidence of all four inspections; in fact, some cards lack indication that any inspections had been made except the final inspection.

Building Department office records are apparently inadequate, for little or no information is available at City Hall in the "official permanent files" that indicate what or how many inspections were made. Construction also differs from that shown on the original approved plans. No evidence is available in the Building Department office records to indicate that such deviations had been authorized by the Department, as required by Section 302-a of the Code. In most instances the deviations from the approved plans are in violation of the Code.

We recommend the Council review the Building Department's needs and operational procedures and methods of maintaining both office and field records to avoid a repetition of these conditions in the future.

Very truly yours, M. J. McDONOUGH, CHIEF John F. Baxter Area Supervisor

Rumors circulating among workers of Columbia Steel yesterday that another 200 men would be laid off this week-end received no backing of company officials.

Local officials of the plant were unavailable for comment, but a U.S. Steel spokesman in Los Angeles said he had visited the plant yesterday and knew nothing of the lay-off rumor.

Closing of the open hearth furnaces last week for installation of new charging machines resulted in the laying off of 170 men for about four weeks, as was reported in the Herald Sunday.

Officials said later that the mill would be reopened on a "two-furnace level" when operations resumed and that workers would be called back on a seniority basis. No information on when the other two furnaces would be put into operation was released.

Dandoy Declared Ineligible at SC

Aramis Dandoy, former Torrance High School football great, was declared ineligible for Spring football practice at USC this week under a new PCC practice eligibility rule.

The rule states "an athlete must be substantially eligible for out-of-season practice as well as for seasonal competition." Dandoy, who has been working nearly full time for his brother, owner of the Dandoy Glass Co. here, besides going to school, had "incompletes" in several subjects last semester. He will have to make them up in summer school, and meanwhile, will not be able to report for Spring practice on March 15, according to Vic Schmidt, PCC commissioner. He will be able to make up deficiencies in time for the coming football season, however.

# Blast Rocks Sunset Oil Refinery, Six Workers Escape Plant Unhurt

## Estimate \$10,000 Damage In Oil Fire

An explosion and fire at a Keystone oil refinery Tuesday night destroyed a gasoline cracking unit and sent six employees scamparing from the plant. None was injured.

Two fire companies hurried to the scene at the Sunset Oil Co. refinery, 21000 S. Figueroa St., and brought the fire under control in about an hour.

Damage was estimated at about \$10,000. The \$1,000,000 cracking unit was put into operation just last November and was under construction for more than a year before that.

The explosion was heard for blocks. Flames, which shot 300 feet into the air, were visible for about five miles.

Refinery Superintendent Cecil Squire said that the fire was caused when a pipe pulled out of a header, releasing to the atmosphere crude oil under 600 pounds pressure and at a temperature of 900 degrees.

The fire was confined to the heater of the unit, Squire said, and the rest of the plant was not damaged.

Steam from "smothering lines" built into the cracking unit helped firemen subdue the flames.

Two Los Angeles policemen who were patrolling the area when the unit exploded, reported the fire to the San Pedro station which, in turn, relayed the call to the fire departments.

An estimated 5000 gallons of oil burned before the two county fire companies brought the blaze under control.

Whittier Serl Chessman, 61, father of Carry Chessman, the infamous "Red Light Bandit" who is now in death row at San Quentin, died suddenly Wednesday afternoon at the home of a Torrance friend.

Funeral rites for the father, who died of a heart attack, are pending at Stone and Myers Mortuary. He was visiting Mrs. Esther Woodham, of 20375 Earl Ave., prior to his death and had been there just a few days.

This son is awaiting execution at San Quentin for murder. A novel that the condemned man has been writing while in death row is just about ready for publication. He earned his nickname by flashing a red light from his ear before robbing couples in various lovers' lanes.

The father was a resident of 8280 Largo St. in Los Angeles. His son is his only surviving relative.

Final Rites Held for Mother of Local Woman

Funeral services were held Monday for Florence Kathleen Fichtenau, 47, mother of Mrs. LaVonne Rodgers of 22334 Kathryn Ave., Torrance.

Delinquents and Education Topics Of TEAC Meeting

"Juvenile Delinquency and Educational Problems" will be one of the topics to be discussed at the monthly luncheon meeting of the Torrance Educational Advisory Committee, to be held Monday at 12 noon at the WCA building, 2320 Carson St.

Also on the agenda is a report on a meeting of the national school board officials, by Mrs. Grace Wright, member of the Board of Education, and an announcement of election details for the coming school bond election on March 9.

## Council Field Hits Seven as Two File

Barring some 11th hour surprises, the field for the coming municipal elections on April 19 appears to be about complete at this time—with the deadline for filing arriving at 12 noon today.

Seven candidates have filed formal nomination papers for the two Council vacancies and the City Clerk and City Treasurer are so far unopposed for return to those offices.

Filing for the City Council as of yesterday afternoon were: Willy G. Blount (incumbent), 144 El Prado; Francis W. Durr, 8104 Hakon Rd.; Thirvin D. Fleetwood, 8687 W. 162nd St.; Alvin K. Hill, 1645 Greenwood Ave.

Albert Ison, 1504 Engracia; Mrs. Herma Tillin, 19914 Ocean Ave.; Jack E. White, 4808 W. 176th Pl.

Petitions still out have been obtained by Mrs. Polly Di Mayle, 200 Paseo de Granada, Councilman Blount; and Robert F. Evans, 5107 Sharyne Lane, City Clerk A. H. Bartlett and City Treasurer Harriett V. Leech, both official candidates for re-election, have no opposition at this point, and may be unopposed.

Bond Issues

In addition to the two Councilman seats, and the Clerk and Treasurer's office, the city ballot will contain four bond propositions.

New Petition Out

Another possible entry in the race for city offices appeared yesterday afternoon when Jess W. Dean, of 1443 Post Ave., took out a nominating petition at the City Hall. All petitions must be filed by noon today.

Propositions calling for funds to build a swimming pool, new civic center, central fire station, and to rehabilitate the city's park system.

Also on the ballot as a result of Tuesday night's Council action will be a charter amendment straightening out the procedures for Board of Education elections.

No changes in procedures for the school board are embodied in the amendment, it was explained. The wording of the city charter in the amendment will make it agree with the requirements of the State Education Code.

Best to file his nominating petition was Jack White, who turned the document over to the City Clerk yesterday morning.

In filing his nomination yesterday, White released the following statement:

"Having been a resident of the City of Torrance for several years and watched with proud eyes its phenomenal growth, I have become aware of many problems which beset us. A few of these seem to stand out among others, such as the need for more and better service for the tax dollar; increased police and fire protection; a better balance between residential and industrial growth and an ever-mindful eye toward efficiency and economy in government.

"I certainly feel there is need for greater polling of, and quite



THE LAST WORD . . . A craze which may sweep the entire country is shown in its humble beginnings right at Hickory Ave. and El Dorado St. in Torrance. Yes, it's a double garage owned by what is obviously a two-car family.

## City Told Leasing Bill To Be Studied

The report that Torrance's application for extension of leasing powers on Torrance Municipal Airport property from 25 to 50 years had been placed on the special session agenda of the California Legislature was confirmed by telegram this week by Assemblyman Vincent Thomas, now in Sacramento.

In a message to City Manager George Stevens, Thomas confirmed the Herald's exclusive report Sunday that the matter would be on the agenda when the session opened last Monday.

Assemblyman Thomas, who represents Torrance and the Harbor area in the Assembly, said he would notify the city when the bill was due to come up for consideration. City Attorney James M. Hill plans to appear before the Legislature on behalf of the measure.

Under the terms of the bill, the city would be given authority to grant ground leases for periods up to 50 years instead of the present 25 years. The measure was sought by the city when interest in part of the southeast section of the airport was sought by developers for extensive commercial construction.

Woman's Screams Prevent Attack

An attempted rape was thwarted Monday by a Torrance housewife whose screams drove off her attacker, police reported this week.

Mrs. Blanche Hovis, 31, of 1614 W. 213th St., told officers that a young man with blond, cropped hair accosted her as she was walking along 213th St. at Bow Ave.

He knooked her to the pavement and she began screaming, she said. The attacker threatened "Stop screaming or I'll kill you," but Mrs. Hovis continued her cries and the young man fled.

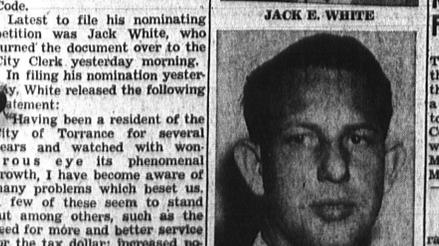
The victim was treated for bruises at Harbor General Hospital.

Moose Dance Nets \$188 For March of Dimes Here

The March of Dimes Drive in Torrance was boosted by \$188 this week when Jess Dean of the Torrance Moose Club turned a check for that amount over to local drive Chairman Clara Conner, postmaster. The money was the proceeds from the Moose-sponsored dance for the March of Dimes on Jan. 30.

WEATHER

One hundredth of an inch of rain fell on Torrance yesterday, the Weather Bureau reports, and a few scattered showers are expected today with little change in temperature. It will probably be cloudy most of the day, with a high of about 63 and a low of about 49.



JACK E. WHITE



THRIVIN FLEETWOOD